

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.-14. (cancelled)

15. (new) A rail guide apparatus for suspending and guiding a sliding component, the apparatus comprising:

a rail guide comprising side-by-side first and second guiding rails, each said guiding rail comprising a vertical strut, an upper horizontal leg extending from the vertical strut toward the upper horizontal leg of the other guiding rail and ending at a downward extending flange, and a lower horizontal leg extending from the vertical strut toward the lower horizontal leg of the other guiding rail; and

a leading carriage and a following carriage coupled to said sliding component, each carriage being coupled to said sliding component by a shaft extending vertically between said lower horizontal legs, each carriage having a pair of support rollers rotatable about a horizontal axis and supported on respective said lower horizontal legs, and a pair of side-by-side first and second guide rollers rotatable about respective vertical axes and running between said vertical struts,

wherein the first guide roller of the leading carriage extends higher than the second guide roller of the leading carriage, the first guide roller of the leading carriage being guided by both the vertical strut of the first guide rail and the flange of the first guide rail, the second guide roller of the leading carriage being guided only by the vertical strut of the second guide rail,

wherein the second guide roller of the following carriage extends higher than the first guide roller of the following carriage, the second guide roller of the following carriage being guided by both the vertical strut of the second guide rail and the flange of the second guide rail, the first guide roller of the following carriage being guided only by the vertical strut of the first guide rail,

whereby, where the first and second guiding rails are disposed so that respective said flanges form a butt joint, the carriages will move in the same direction, and where the first and second guiding rails diverge, the leading carriage will follow the first guiding rail and the following carriage will follow the second guiding rail.

16. (new) The rail guide apparatus of claim 15 wherein the first and second guiding rails have identical profiles and are arranged in a mirror-symmetric relationship.

17. (new) The rail guide apparatus of claim 15 wherein each said guiding rail comprises a recess for receiving a centering element between the rails, whereby the flanges can be aligned to form a butt joint.

18. (new) The rail guide apparatus of claim 15 wherein the lower horizontal legs are spaced apart to form a slot where the first and second guiding rails are disposed so that respective said flanges form a butt joint.

19. (new) The guide apparatus of claim 15 wherein each said upper horizontal leg is formed with an undercut groove for attaching the rail to a sub-construction.

20. (new) The guide apparatus of claim 19 further comprising a bracket having a hook-like projection which engages the undercut groove of one of said rails.